



Report to Cabinet

Subject Apprenticeships

Date 2nd June 2011

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1. Purpose of the Report

To inform Cabinet of a local employment scheme for apprentices.

2. Background

Over the recent years, the level of employee turnover has significantly fallen as a response to the economic recession and reductions in public sector jobs. As a consequence opportunities for development in terms of refreshing the workforce have been limited. Equally it has not been possible to recruit new people into the public sector and to provide them with opportunities and training. There is concern nationally about the numbers of unemployed young people and also the numbers of people without qualifications. Within Gedling 8.1% of those claiming JSA are under 24 (a total of 740).

As an employer of reasonable size within the Borough there is a role that we can play in addressing the qualifications and employability of young people through apprenticeships. It may be that they do not ultimately find permanent employment with us, but an intervention can establish them successfully in the jobs market.

Apprenticeships are available in a range of subjects, those relevant to our services include:

- Business Administration
- Customer Services
- Accountancy
- IT
- Leisure

- Surveying
- Media/creative

There are 3 levels of apprenticeship

- Intermediate – NVQ Level 2 – provides basic skills and an entry level qualification
- Advanced – NVQ Level 3 – requires 5 GCSEs or Intermediate Apprenticeship to start and gives an A level equivalent qualification
- Higher – NVQ Level 4 – these are recent additions and entry qualifications not defined, however Level 4 is Foundation Degree Level

The Higher Apprenticeship model is newly established, and the framework for qualification has not yet been laid out. In future years we may wish to consider these apprenticeships but the proposal at present is to concentrate on the Advanced Apprenticeships as we can offer work experience at that level.

3. Proposal

It is proposed that we establish 3 Apprenticeships, two Customer Services posts that will mainly be based within Revenues/Housing Benefits and Customer Services and one Business Administration post based in other services areas. It is proposed that we operate these apprenticeships through an Apprenticeship Training Agency – though this route the apprentice is employed by the agency and ‘hired’ out to the employer, their terms and conditions are set by the agency and they will receive the relevant apprentice rate (either £97.50 per week aged 16 – 18 or the national minimum wage at 19+). As a host employer we would be required to pay the costs of salaries.

We have successfully appointed two horticultural apprentices in PASC through the Agency route with Leicester College. West Notts College in Mansfield are also an Apprenticeship Training Agency, and as a more local organisation, it is proposed that we work with them on this model. As far as possible we would target people within the Gedling area, working with schools to encourage applications for the posts.

4. Resource Implications

The apprenticeship takes up to two years to complete, depending on the candidate’s existing qualifications and ability. The cost per Advanced Apprenticeship would be around £10,000 (including NI costs) in total through the Apprenticeship Training Agency route. It is hoped that the costs of the qualification and training would be met by the Training Agency, although this will depend on the age and previous qualifications of the individual apprentice.

There is no dedicated funding identified for apprentices and it would therefore be funded from existing resources. For the Customer Service Apprentices the costs

can be met from the Housing Benefit reserve, for the Business Administration Apprentices the costs can be met by top slicing of the salaries budget through the vacancy provision as several departments would benefit from the additional resource. In addition, if a Department is able to offer a specific Apprenticeship relevant to their service area, then the costs should be met from their budgets.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that Cabinet note these proposals and the funding arrangements, and agree to the Head of Customer Services and Organisational Development entering into discussions with an Apprentice Training Agency for the provision of apprentices.